



U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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Senator Gregg, HELP Committee Pass Project BioShield Act

Bill Allows for Research and Development, Stockpiling and Emergency Access to Drugs and Vaccines

Washington, DC—The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, under the Chairmanship of Senator Judd Gregg (R-New Hampshire) today passed a biodefense bill designed to protect American citizens from the threat of a bioterror attack.

The Project BioShield Act, or S. 15, encompasses the administration's "BioShield" proposal, which was unveiled by President Bush during his State of the Union address in January. The BioShield bill passed the committee with unanimous bipartisan support.

"We are hours from a war with Iraq. As we stand on the brink of armed conflict I can think of no more important work than passing legislation to protect the American people from the threat of bioterror attack. With the passage of this bill, we ensure that our nation is ready to respond. This bill gives the federal government tools to protect the public from the wide range of bioterror weapons terrorists could use against us," Senator Gregg said.

The Project BioShield legislation will spur the development and production of modern and effective vaccines, drugs and devices to protect Americans against a national security threat involving biological, nuclear, radiological or chemical weapons. It will develop readiness in three areas: research and development, procurement and stockpiling, and emergency access. The Project BioShield Act also does the following:

- Allows the government to buy improved vaccines, devices or drugs for smallpox, anthrax, and botulism toxin.
- Makes funds available to buy vaccines to protect against other dangerous pathogens, such as Ebola and plague, as soon as scientists verify these products are safe and effective.
- Strengthens NIH development of new drugs by speeding research and development on promising new discoveries.
- Gives the FDA the ability to make promising treatments available quickly in emergency situations.

Today the committee also unanimously passed S. 650, the Pediatric Drugs Research Authority as well as S. 538, the Lifespan Respite Care Act.

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